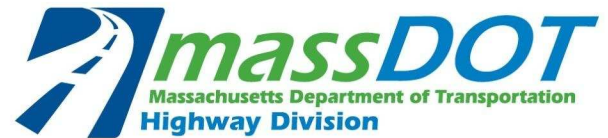




Charles D. Baker, Governor
Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor
Jamey Tesler, Acting Secretary & CEO
Jonathan L. Gulliver, Highway Administrator



April 7, 2021

Senator Joe Boncore
Representative Mike Connolly
Senator Pat Jehlen
Representative Christine Barber
Representative Erika Uytterhoeven
Senator Sal DiDomenico
Representative Jay Livingstone

RE: McGrath Highway and Project 608482

Dear Senators and Representatives;

Thank you for your recent letter regarding an upcoming maintenance resurfacing/safety project on Route 28, the McGrath Highway in Somerville, and a short segment in Cambridge. This corridor provides a number of opportunities for long lasting improvements and I appreciate all of your involvement and advocacy to make these benefits greater and more impactful.

I have reviewed your comments with our design and construction engineers and we are committed to providing separation between the traffic lanes and the bike lanes. As I am sure you are aware, the flex posts typically used to provide separation, although effective, do represent a maintenance issue. Because the project area already has a wide buffered area between the bike path and the travel lanes I have asked our staff to use the corridor to pilot some alternative separation treatments to flex posts.

The separators are one of the last work items completed on this project with an installation expected in fall 2022. We will be working with stakeholders to establish the locations and parameters of the pilot prior to installation. The separators will remain in place from April 15th through November 15th – the start/end of snow and ice season. This will enable us to maintain the bike lane at a safe level of service during winter events and, because the lane widths are not changing, there will still be a buffer for cyclists that ranges from 2' to 7' along the corridor during winter months.

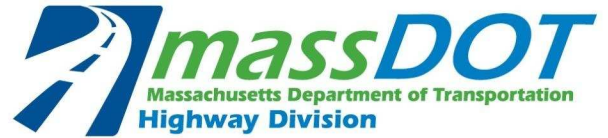
This project includes a lane reduction, to create the space necessary for the bike lanes, with the main goal to reduce speeds through the corridor. We believe that re-engineering the corridor will affect driver behavior and reduce vehicle speeds. Modifying the design of a roadway has been found to be more effective of achieving a reduction in vehicle speeds than simply lowering speed limits.

Below please find some additional responses to your inquiry:

- State of Good Repair
 - The current project design includes repairs and upgrades to address the damaged and missing bridge railings and all the sidewalks within the project limits will be ADA compliant.
- Connectivity to Adjacent Facilities
 - To the south the project design includes bike facility connections and has been coordinated with the Cambridge Crossing and other developments under consideration adjacent to McGrath Highway. To the north the project bike lanes will continue and



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connect to the Kensington Connector as part of the planned Route 28/Route 38 Safety Improvement Project.

- Other Issues:
 - Narrow Ramp: The project design includes making the northbound ramp from Washington Street to McGrath Highway a single lane and will include a buffered bike lane. I asked the District to continue to work with the City of Somerville to evaluate the turning radius onto Cross Street from this ramp.
 - Superior Nut: We will perform field inspections to evaluate the parking situation and identify any potential solutions, but in the short term we will communicate with the Massachusetts State Police and Somerville Police Department on enforcement.
 - Future Connection to the Somerville Path: Both Highway Districts 4 and 6 staff have been participating in regular meetings with the City of Somerville and Cambridge to coordinate the ongoing developments along McGrath Highway, specifically at the McGrath Highway and Rufo Road signalized intersection. These discussions will continue to coordinate future developments in the areas and ensure safe connections can be developed to the Community Path and Grand Junction Path.

Thank you again, your observations, comments and concerns provide an additional focus on the issues that directly impact your constituents daily. I look forward to continuing this dialogue as we continue to address the needs and future vision of the McGrath Highway.

Very truly yours,



Jonathan L. Gulliver
Highway Administrator

Cc: Jamey Tesler, Acting Secretary of Transportation and C.E.O. MassDOT
Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassDOT
Paul Stedman, District 4 Highway Director, MassDOT